

Balanced Growth -
A New Planning
Paradigm

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The City South Community Plan represents a new planning paradigm for the region's future growth and development. The inherent beauty of tree lined creeks and river bottoms, scenic pasture land, unbridled thicket, and the serene bird watcher's paradise at Mitchell Lake present a remarkable opportunity to acknowledge, preserve and revere the timeless South Texas landscape. This landscape tells a story of thousands of years of human presence, evident in the area's rich natural, archeological and historic resources. The land supported human settlement by the prehistoric native peoples -

Spanish-Mexican settlers, European immigrants, and Texans - all of whom worked the land, and on which new traditions, such as ranching and the modern petroleum industry, were born. The Southside's backdrop of unique natural, historic, and scenic characteristics provides a remarkable palette on which a new economic engine and trade economy can etch an exciting new vision of sustainable, quality growth and development for the city's southern reach.

Balanced Growth - A New Planning Paradigm

During recent decades, San Antonio has experienced significant residential and commercial development in the northern and western sectors of the city. In contrast, the southern sector has seen limited growth and economic development. In the spring of 2002, in an effort to create "balanced growth" by di-

recting a new type of sustainable development for the Southside, the San Antonio City Council authorized the Planning Director to prepare a study for the purpose of limited annexation. With the guidance of this study and proper future planning, the Southside is poised for economic prosperity.



Annexation

The limited purpose annexation study was used as the basis for an extended analysis by an Urban Land Institute (ULI) advisory panel, contracted by the City of San Antonio in August 2002. The ULI panel members, who represented a variety of planning and development expertise, visited San Antonio and the proposed planning area during October 2002 and interviewed several hundred stakeholders. The final report of the Urban Land Institute provided a 25-50 year vision for growth, identifying several planning recommendations:

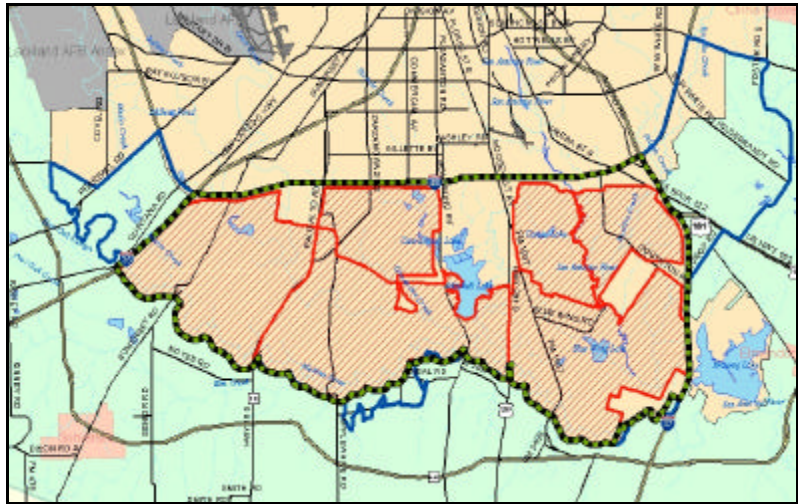
- Establish sustainable design principles and practices
- Plan for greenways along roads by developing open space and a hike & bike trail network to buffer uses and provide access to recreation water amenities
- Transform highways into parkways and provide major east-west connections
- Provide rail spurs where feasible and high tech infrastructure
- Incorporate traditional building styles and design with nature
- Limit leap frog development
- Promote a job/housing balance, regional retail development and traditional neighborhood development
- Create civic public spaces and attractive streets
- Set aside as much as 25% of developable land for agricultural use and encourage compact development to maintain rural character
- Promote higher density uses along Loop 410 and decreasing density that transitions to agricultural and open space uses along the Medina River

City South Community Plan

As a result of the studies, a 57 square mile limited purpose annexation area was approved by City Council and took effect in January 2003. Limited purpose annexation triggers a requirement for conversion to a full purpose annexation status within three years, unless the date for full purpose annexation is postponed by written agreement between the City and a majority of the affected landowners. State law establishes planning milestones for each of the three years:

- **Year One** - Land use and intensity plan is developed as a basis for services and Capital Improvement Project (CIP) planning
- **Year Two** - Planning area is included in the long-range financial forecast and considered for identification future CIP projects
- **Year Three** - CIP projects for the area and potential sources of funding are included in the adopted CIP program

The development of the City South Community Plan assists in fulfilling the land use and intensity plan requirement that is a basis for capital improvement project planning.



A month later, in February 2003, Team Toyota, representatives of the State of Texas, Bexar County, and the City, announced that Toyota Motor Corporation had selected a site in the newly annexed area for its new automobile manufacturing plant. In May 2003, a development agreement and incentive package was approved by the City of San Antonio, confirming the Toyota plant as a reality in the Southside planning area. This economic hallmark provides a unique opportunity to encourage sustainable development. A balance of agri-business, mineral extraction, trade activities, and tourism can be sustained and encouraged in a manner

that conserves precious natural and historical resources unique to South Texas, while providing opportunities for new manufacturing development.

Community Planning Process

The City's Master Plan policies encourage public participation in the land use decision-making process. A part of the Master Plan vision is the promotion of balanced and responsible urban design, planning and development, and protection of the city's historical, cultural, and material resources. To that end, the city sought to engage the public in a community planning process. Citizens and interested stakeholders were invited to attend a series of three public meetings that were held in May and June 2003. Notices of the community meetings



City South Community Plan Public Meeting Schedule

May 6 - Orientation meeting

Several presentations by City and County officials, identifying the major components of the CS Plan.

May 17 - Planning Workshop

All day workshop culminating in stakeholder participants identification of important planning concepts for the future of south San Antonio.

June 10 - Open House

Display of Community Plan proposal, based on stakeholder input from workshop, with opportunity for comments.

were provided to all property owners within the planning area and to more than 100 stakeholder organizations with an interest in the development of the Southside. An orientation meeting was held on May 6, to offer information on major Community Plan components from various City and County officials. Next, an all day Planning Workshop was held on May 17 where more than 150 participants identified the lifestyle and character of the Southside, created base maps identifying significant features, and developed proposed vision plans for the planning area with the assistance of almost 40 design professionals and planners. More than 600 persons participated in all planning workshops and provided valuable input in the process. In addition, several meetings were held with the South San Antonio Chamber of Commerce to further solicit input from the business sector. The Vision Plan development evolved from the themes that were articulated in the community planning process.



A technical advisory team provided assistance throughout the planning process. This team included representatives from City of San Antonio departments, the Mayor's Office and City Council Districts 3 and 4, American Institute of Architects - San Antonio Chapter, Bexar County, Bexar Met, Brooks City Base, City Public Service, Independent School Districts, Kelly USA, Land Heritage Institute, Metropolitan Planning Organization, San Antonio Planning and Zoning Commissions, San Antonio Development Agency, San Antonio Housing Authority, San Antonio Water System, San Antonio River Authority, Texas Department of Transportation, VIA Metropolitan Transit and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.



The City South Community Plan is consistent with the requirements of the City Charter and the Unified Development Code. It was developed in an inclusive manner, and contains the essential planning elements pertaining to land use, transportation, and community facilities. The plan was presented for consideration in June, at a public hearing of the City's Planning Commission. Upon the Commission's recommendation, the plan was presented to City Council for formal adoption as a component of the City's Comprehensive Master Plan. The Plan serves as a guide for future capital improvements, bond recommendations, and land development.

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